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Consolidation of Three Graduate Degree Programs into One MS/PhD Degree Program
Department of Animal, Dairy, and Veterinary Sciences
College of Agriculture
Utah State University

Section I: The Request

Utah State University (USU) requests approval to consolidate the three existing graduate degree programs in the Department of Animal, Dairy, and Veterinary Sciences (ADVS) into a single graduate degree program (Master of Science (MS)/Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)) with five specializations (Animal Management, Animal Health and Disease, Animal Molecular Genetics, Animal Nutrition, and Reproduction and Development). Students entering the proposed single graduate degree program would receive a MS or PhD in Animal, Dairy, and Veterinary Sciences. As is the case now, under the proposed restructuring a student's program of study will come from available graduate level courses taught at the University. Generally students draw upon courses in ADVS, Biology, Chemistry, and Mathematics and Statistics. There will be no new courses added or classes deleted in ADVS as a result of the proposed graduate program changes.

Section II: Need

The three existing graduate degree programs in the ADVS Department are continuations of the degree programs that existed in the separate Departments of Animal Science, Dairy Science, and Veterinary Science. These departments were consolidated to create the ADVS Department in the late 1970's. A Cooperative States Research, Education, and Extension Services (CSREES) Review Team that conducted a comprehensive review of the ADVS Department in November of 2004 noted, "It is evident from the degree offerings that the marriage of the three departments, although taking place some twenty years ago, has not been fully consecrated." The CSREES reviewers recommended specifically that the ADVS Department be proactive and combine the three undergraduate degree offerings (Animal Science, Dairy Science, and Bioveterinary Science) into one degree and to consider making similar changes in the graduate programs. The first suggested change was implemented fall semester of 2007 as one undergraduate degree and four emphases. Following the implementation of a single undergraduate ADVS degree program, the ADVS Graduate Programs Committee (GPC) was given the charge by the Department Head to conduct an internal review of the graduate programs in ADVS and recommend whether or not to merge the three graduate degree programs into one. The GPC identified potential efficiencies in program delivery management and increased flexibility for graduate students that would be derived from the consolidation of the existing graduate degrees. The GPC then recommended to the Department Head that ADVS consider implementing a one-graduate-degree program. Discussion by the ADVS Faculty followed, which then led to the general consensus that significant benefits would accrue from combining the three ADVS Department graduate programs into a single degree program with five specializations. The ADVS faculty at a departmental meeting on April 8, 2008 ratified the proposal.

The consolidation of the three graduate degrees into a one-degree program will strengthen graduate education in ADVS and provide greater opportunities with more in-depth research experience. ADVS has averaged 25 MS and PhD students over the past five years, with low

numbers enrolled in the Dairy and Bioveterinary Science degrees. This proposed change will not only ensure the continuance of productive and viable graduate degree programs, but will maintain the versatility of research options for students wanting to specialize their training and research experiences.

Current Graduate Programs offered in ADVS

Master of Science degree

Animal Science

Specializations in Animal Management, Animal Nutrition, Breeding and Genetics, Molecular Biology, and Reproductive Biology

Dairy Science

Specializations in Animal Nutrition, Breeding and Genetics, Dairy Management, Molecular Biology, and Reproductive Biology

Bioveterinary Science

Specializations in Parasitology and Theriogenology

Doctor of Philosophy degree

Animal Science

Specializations in Animal Nutrition, Breeding and Genetics, Molecular Biology, and Reproductive Biology

Bioveterinary Science

Specializations in Parasitology and Theriogenology

Proposed Single Graduate Program to be offered in ADVS

Master of Science in Animal, Dairy, and Veterinary Sciences

Five specializations: Animal Management; Animal Health and Disease; Animal Molecular Genetics; Animal Nutrition; and Reproduction and Development

Doctor of Philosophy in Animal, Dairy, and Veterinary Sciences

Five specializations: Animal Management; Animal Health and Disease; Animal Molecular Genetics; Animal Nutrition; and Reproduction and Development

Although no longer a part of a degree name, the merging of the current three graduate degree programs will still allow ADVS to provide options for students interested in pursuing graduate studies related to the Bioveterinary Sciences. The Bioveterinary Science degree has generally attracted students wanting to pursue training in animal health and disease. Therefore the GPC recommended that Animal Health and Disease be used to describe one of the five specializations in the single-degree MS and PhD programs.

Section III: Institutional Impact

The proposed consolidation will not adversely affect the market demand for graduate students pursuing research programs in the animal sciences. Nor will the proposed change compromise the variety of graduate educational opportunities in ADVS. These changes will likely enhance interest,

particularly with the addition of the Animal Health and Disease emphasis. As mentioned above, student demand for graduate degrees in ADVS has averaged 25 students over the last five years. ADVS anticipates this number to increase with the hiring of faculty who have major research assignments. Two such faculty were hired in January of 2010. At the present time, ADVS will be hiring two new faculty with research assignments of 70% who will specialize in animal infectious disease.

Section 1V: Finances

There will be no financial impact as a result of the proposed consolidation of existing graduate degree programs in ADVS. Funding for the proposed graduate degree programs will be the same as in the past, with primary sources of funding coming from the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station, state E&G funding, and internal and external grants.